

**[Mr. George W. Storey]**

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FOLKLORE-WHITE PIONEER,

Miss Effie Cowan, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas,

District 8. Life history 2,500

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REFERENCE.

"Interview with Mr George W. Storey, Lott, Texas.

"I was born at the old Storey home-place near Dodson Wells, Texas in 1858. My parents Mr and Mrs George W. Storey, came from Alabama in 1851, settling first in Freestone county, Texas, then moving to a farm near Dodson Wells in 1855. This was not far from the village of Durango and the present town of Lott, Texas. When my father arrived he bought land near Dodson Wells, in the valley , and timber [?] in preference to land on the prairie at fifty cents an acre. He paid three dollars an acre for the valley land. At that time it was thought the prairie land was only good for stock and grazing purposes.

"\*1 My my father transacted his business [ in In the early days \*1] sometimes at Durango, the nearest place, sometimes at Calvert and as far south as Millican. This was the terminal of the railroad then, before it was built to Marlin and Waco. Then , after the railroad

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reached Marlin , we transacted most of our business there with the late Marx evy Levy . Father was buying land and paying for it and often went over to Marlin in the late fall or early spring and made arrangements with Mr Levy for credit to run the farm and house hold until fall. When the crops were harvested , Mr Levy was paid from the produce.

“Father was a blacksmith as well as farmer for . For many years he operated his shop at Durango, [?] which was near our home. He became famous throughout the section for making fine farm tools, wagons, etc. He was a Confederate veteran serving in Company A, Thirtieth Texas Regiment, which was cammanded by C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Col. Colonel E.J. Gurley. After the war was over , they were neighbors in Falls county. Col. Gurley owned and worked farms near the present town of Satin, the The first station on the \*2 railroad, when it came through , was named [?] [Gurley?] for Colonel Gurley. This was the [San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad.\*2]

“In 1906 I moved to the town of Lott , Texas where I still reside. I paid \$200.00 an acre near Lott for the very land which my father turned down when he came to Falls county, for fifty cents an acre. I have lived here and reared my family. my My wife, [passed away in 1936 . \*3] to whom I was married in 1881 . , \*3 But I will try to give you a little of the history of the town of Lott which has been my home since I moved here in 1906.

“Lott is situated in Western Falls County 12 miles west of Marlin, it came into existence with the coming of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad. The records show that the first meeting of city officials was on December 15th, 1890 , with A.B. Hemphill as mayor, and A.L. Butchee, E.C. Gordon, T.J. Ferguson J.E.Jordan and T.E. Glass as alderman. L.A. Ferguson was city marshal and J.A. Farrer was secretary - treasurer.

“The town was named for Uriah Lott, a civil engineer and builder who had much to do with the building of the railroad and its completion. According to my memory , quite a lot of difficulties were encountered when the railroad was under construction, its purpose being to [?] connect Waco with San Antonio and the Gulf Coast. For several months a

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gap in the road from Lott to Cameron was left unclosed. The trouble being financial requirements. It was at this time that Mr Lott stepped in and worked, not only to construct the road but to see that finances were available. He made trips to New York to secure funds for investment and finally was successful. 3 "District Court records of Falls county, also Milam County show the following took place regarding the right of way. When the surveyors reached Cameron from the south, a certain land owner refused to sell the right of way. The engineers and railroad authorities relying on the rights as given in the constitution regarding "Rights of ways or construction on behalf of general public welfare, "went right ahead throwing up the right of way on the land in question.

"The district judge, at the demand of the owner of the land, granted an injunction with a view to stopping the engineers from "trespassing". The attorneys on the other hand for the railroad came into Falls county court, of which the late Judge Goodrich was judge, laid the facts before him, and he dissolved the injunction and the railroad officials continued to operate. In this development in the issue the Milam county judge contended that the injunction which he had granted was just and valid, so he ordered the arrest of the sheriff of Falls county, the late John Ward, for contempt of court for interfering with his orders to enforce the injunction.

"At the same time Judge Goodrich of Marlin ruled that the sheriff of Milam county, in his efforts to enforce the injunction, was interfering with the "due course of law" and guilty of contempt of court. Hence this situation arose in which each sheriff was ordered to arrest each the other for contempt of court. It was said they did this and often afterwards amused themselves and others by relating the incident. The tangle was finally ironed out and the gap in the railroad closed, but it delayed the completion for two years. 4 "During those two years the trains ran from Waco to Lott, (making Lott a sort of terminal, and returned; while trains ran from points south to Cameron and returned. Uriah Lott was untiring in his efforts to connect the road and when it was finally completed in 1892 naturally the town was named for him. Crude as were the first days of the town, it is natural that being a railroad town this brought people from the surrounding communities by because of the

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advantages the railroad had to offer in those days. In they came from the communities which the railroad had passed by.

“These communities suffered from the exit to the railroad towns these . These smaller communities were Durango, Rupee, Carolina, Morreville and the less thickly populated areas, such as Landrum on the east and Cego and Blevins on the west. Especially did Durango feel the effects of the coming of the railroad [?] coming and it lost its standing as being one of the foremost communities due to the loss of many of its citizens.

“The nearest community which was completely wiped out by the coming of the iron horse was old Rupee, which was an active community from 1886 to 1890. This place was located about two miles south of the present town of Lott near Pond Creek. There was a post office there. Dr A.F. Belo, Dr H.E. Whatley and Dr Stone were the physicians. Dr Belo had a store. Other of this communities community's citizens were the Lehmans, parents of the Lehmans of Rosebud, Val Moore family, the E.J. Daffin family, James Hodges George Hodges family and T.F. Glass who married Miss Alice Hodges, daughter fo G.A. Hodges. Also the Killens, the L.A. Mc Creary family and others. These families moved to Lott, Travis, Rosebud and Chilton, towns of on the railroad. 5 “Some of these early families passed completly from Falls county. Dr Belo (Brother of A.H. Belo of Dallas of Dallas news fame) moved back to his old home in Alabama where he passed away several years later. It is difficult to name all the first families who came to this new town of the nineties, because there were so many. Lott sprang up quickly and in almost three years after the coming of the railroad it became one of the foremost towns Falls counties foremost towns county . So the town ecame became a commercial center on the west of the Brazos for a radius of the area round about.

“Among the most outstanding men who helped to build the town is R.W. King, who still lives in Lott. He too, was on the ground when the railroad was completed and the first through trains came thro' town. He was the foreman of the construction company that finished the gap between Lott and Cameron. He also was in charge of the construction of

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the station house. \* For awhile he roomed with the depot agent in the station house when it was [?] completed and the rail road agent took charge, as there were robberies in those days of the depot agents money. over

"Mr King was also in chge charge of building the tation station house at Chilton, and it is worthy of note that many buildings stand today in the townof Lott and Chilton, as reminders of Mr Kings King's working days when he worked at the trade of building contractor. He built the present building of the Carolina Masonic Lodge, several of the business houses, the Baptist church, the Methodist church, the old Church of Christ building, the old two-story wood building which gave way in 1904 to the newer structure to be replaced in 1935 by the present modern building. When the depot was completed, he roomed for a short time, with the agent because there were so many robberies of safes in the agents offices.

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"Another pioneer man was Dr M.A. Hayes whose early days were spent at old Rupee prior to 1890 after which he movee moved to the Lott community where he is still practicing and practices medicine in the town now. He recollects riding one of the early passenger trains from Lott to Wacp Waco on the first day of March 1890. It was before the Lott Cameron gap was closed. He has good reason for remembering to remember this train trip , for he rode [?] to Waco to get a liscense to marry Miss Cora Scott of Travis . This town was not far from where he lived at old Rupee . [?] there was no Travis then since the railroad had only been built thro' the country where later the railroad made the staion of Travis. Miss Cora Scott was the daughter of "Grandma" scott who Scott. Grandma Scott passed away in 1938 , only a few months before she would have become a centenarian, and she was a sister of the late Judge Sam Scott of Waco, Texas.

"Another interesting experience in the early train riding days was related by the late Mrs ordon Gordon Gaither of Chilton. She related that while teaching at Durango, she had occasion to go to Waco and the trains had just begun running between Lott and that

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city. "When we reached Lott it was a new place and a new name, the only station was a shack in the middle of the road, before the depot was built. Nothing but working men were there, who looked rough and not so inviting to a lone young woman expecting to ride through the blank prairie and dense woods around Gurley. But railroads were supposed to be safe so, away I went — and had the time of my life. After we had ridden about an hour some one called "Chilton, Chilton" and I looked out to see more mesquite bushes"! 7 "Progressive citizens in the early days of Lott formed a stock company and built and operated a flour mill in Lott. This was about the year 1896. The directors were A. [?] Poulson, J.H. English, Dr Gordon, C.L. Trice and A. Patton. Mr Poulson tells the story of how he and Mr Patton were scheduled to go to Westphalia Wetphalia and sell stock in the mill and how it turned out to be a record-breaking cold day, that February of 1896. It was one of the few times the temperature went far below freezing and approached zero. He related how, when he reached home and took off his overcoat, the rain and moisture had frozen on it and, when he stood it on the floor, it stood there like a scarecrow.

"As the years roll by it is sometimes difficult to be positive who were proprietors of the first retail stores. Henry Seward, now living at Waco perhaps first conducted one of the first retail stores in Lott. J.H. English also had a store and Poulson Brothers opened a saddle and harness shop in June 1891. Other facts compiled from the records show that J.C. Calvert had the first eating place located in a tent. Peter Norman had the first cafe. J.R. Strange owned the first dry goods and grocery store. S.J. Crump had the first drug store. He was also Lott's first postmaster [at Lott?]. D.T. Williamson had the first barber shop. Threadgill and Barnett was the first implement company. Chas.L. Trice the first hardware store. Southwell and Warwick had the first livery stable.

"The other business houses numbered among the first were Mr Hill of Waco, who published Lott's first newspaper [in Lott.?] Lott Water works was first constructed by donations and stock from Lott citizens. Mrs A.G. Minter operated the [?] first hotel. 8 "The first bank established in Lott was in 1897, located temporarily in Ligon's Drug

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Store. J.R. Southwell opened the first market in Lott. School began in 1890 with Miss Annie Pearsall and Miss Addie Pearsall as teachers. H.R. Gwyn and Mrs Della Roberts were among the first students. The Lott Baptist Church was organized in May of 1890 according . According to the minutes of the church , the following enrolled as members: Mr D.J. Barnes of Durango, M.L. Moore of Little Deer Creek. [?] Mesdames M.L. Hamilton and Lula Norville of ittle Little Deer creek, George H. Hale of El Dorado church, James and A. Calvert of Chilton, and Sister Mrs. Addie Ferguson of Popular Springs Church.

“There was a general merchandise store operated by W.D. Lancaster, a Confederate veteran and charter member of the Old Settlers and Confederate Veterans Association. This organization was organized at Lott on July 4th, 1908, according to the minute's of the association. Its charter members included many of Lotts the active citizens of Lott of that day. All of these charter members have passed on except T.G. Peters, who still lives at Lott and Forrest Gaither who lived at Chilton at the time , but no now lives in Waco.

“The people of Lott were known in all parts of the county for their activities in politics and social gatherings. It was the home of many of the of Falls counties old settlers and Confederate veterans of Falls County and annual meetings were held. These meetings were the forerunner of the “Old Settlers and Confederate Veterans Association of Falls County”, now meeting annually at the reunion grounds at Tomilson Hill. 9 “In the year 1892 , the Masonic Lodge was located at [?] Lott . This Lodge (NO. 330) was organized at Carolina in the years 1870 1880 . This Lodge organized and began its meetings in the upper story of a building which was also used as a Presbyterterian cunrch Presbyterian church and schoolhouse. Some of the charter members and early members were, Robert Morris Key, to whom the dispensation of Carolina lodge was delivered until the meeting of the next Grand Lodge which gave this lodge its charter. Robert Morris Key was the first Master of the lodge; J.D. [?] [?] , Senior Warden ; and A.G. Mitchell, Junior Warden. Other early members were Geo. W. Storey, James H. Ball, Andrew Daffin, D.M. Currie, W.T. Wiggin, J.J. Rogers, J.A. Gardner, James Jordan and others.

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"This lodge found most of its members in 1886-87 living in the community of Rupee, Texas, (now known as the Live Oak community), where Dr Belo had a store. So it was then moved from Carolina to Rupee. Other members at this time were A.F. Belo, M.A. Hayes, P.P. Hodges, Mr Priest and others. In the year that the town of Lott began, many of its members moved to Lott, and as the town grew there were many members from Durango and they all decided to move the Lodge, to Lott in 1892. But to this day it is known as Carolina Lodge NO.330. A.F.& A.M.

"This lodge has in its keeping some very old relics which [?] it prizes very highly, among these is consisting of one piece of station furniture used by the Masters of the early Carolina Lodge, also there are several old homemade rawhide bottom chairs, a long tin horn with which the early members used to call the assembly together During the month of October 1938, this horn was used in the old way. Also in the keeping of this lodge are two old kerosene lamps (oil) used in the days of its first meetings. This lodge also has a first minute book which records the early transactions and names of its members.

"The sketch would not be complete without mention of the progress in the schools in Lott from a little one-teacher school to the present Elementary and High school faculty of fifteen teachers and a negro school with three teachers. The district now has an area of 22 1/2 square miles and property valuation of \$773,000. There are levies of 50¢ on the \$100 valuation for bonds and maintenance.

"The people of Lott in the early days had to use water from wells, this inconvenience spurred the demand for adequate water-works and in 1892 the city gave forty acres of land upon which to construct lakes, provided some reliable firm would develop it and establish a public water works system. The citizens met the requirements and a stock company was formed; stock was sold to provide funds. The first directors were Dr C.C. Gordon G.R. Threadgill, John Knox, A. Poulson, C.L. Trice, and J.H. English.



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"The lake was constructed between the hills north and east of town, a steam pump plant was installed, mains were laid liad and a wooden water tank was built where the stool tank stands today. Lott had water. About the time the new water works were ready to go into operation , Mr Threadgill bought the stock and operated the system for awhile selling it to Tom Ferguson who in turn sold it to the late T.F. Glass. Mr Glass managed it until it was purchased by the city and operated as a public utility.